

Portland beats San Antonio 125-117

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Damian Lillard had 26 points and 10 assists, Hassan Whiteside had 17 points and tied a season-high with 23 rebounds, and the Portland Trail Blazers beat the San Antonio Spurs 125-117 on Thursday night.

The Blazers got a major boost off their bench from Gary Trent Jr., who scored 18 points. Trent's points late were important as he hit 4 3-pointers and scored 12 points in the fourth quarter as Portland rallied from a 92-86 deficit.

Trey Lyles had a season-high 23 points and 10 rebounds, DeMar

DeRozan added 21 points and LaMarcus Aldridge added 20 points and eight rebounds for the Spurs.

San Antonio built a 10-point lead multiple times in the first half, but Portland stayed within reach on the strength of the play of Lillard (14 points) and McCollum (11 points), trailing 60-59 at halftime.

While DeRozan struggled from the field (6 for 16), he helped the Spurs with 9-for-9 shooting from the foul line.

A pair of 3-pointers in the third quarter by Carmelo Anthony forced a timeout by the Spurs with 5:23 left in the third as they nursed a 75-74 lead. Anthony kept Portland close, scoring

16 of his 20 points in the second half.

The Blazers also got a 10-point performance off the bench by Anfernee Simons.

A layup by Caleb Swanigan with 3:16 left in the third quarter gave Portland its first lead since the opening quarter. But that advantage was short-lived as the Spurs closed out the quarter on a 9-0 run for a 92-86 lead after three periods.

The tightly contested game could have late-season implications as both teams are fighting for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

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AP Photo/Steve Dykes

San Antonio Spurs guard Derrick White, left, drives to the basket against Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, right, during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland on Thursday.

NIXYAAWII DOMINATES SPARTANS

Golden Eagles hold Pine Eagle to just one point in the first quarter to take charge early

By BRETT KANE
East Oregonian

MISSION — For the Golden Eagles, a slow night can still mean a big win.

The Nixyaawii boys allowed just one lone free throw in a 20-1 first quarter before a lackluster defense let their Spartan visitors cut their deficit back down in the second half. The Golden Eagles escaped the fourth quarter 15-13, but had put up enough distance early on to roll to an 82-37 Old Oregon League home win over Pine Eagle on Thursday night.

The victory improved Nixyaawii to a perfect 8-0 in conference action and pushed them to the No. 1 spot in the league standings.

"I wouldn't say our defense was outstanding," Nixyaawii head coach Shane Rivera said. "We looked a little flat. But kids are kids. They can sense things like that. We played well enough to win."

Nixyaawii senior Mick Schimmel and juniors Tyasin Burns and Magi Moses helped their team to an early 5-0 in lead in what would be their game's biggest quarter.

Spartans junior Curtis Elgueza-bal briefly put a stop to the run with a point at the line with 6:09 left in the first quarter, but Moses responded with five unanswered points, and Schimmel and freshman Reuben Bronson aided him in a quarter-closing, 15-point streak that put the game out of reach for good.

Schimmel, Burns, and freshman Shane Rivera opened the second quarter with an eight-point run for a 27-1 lead with 6:10 left in the half. The Spartans were held scoreless for the first three minutes before junior Jeremiah Simrell posted two of his team's nine points in the quarter.

The Golden Eagles took a 35-10 advantage into the locker room, but the Spartans would return for a stronger second half.

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Nixyaawii's Reuben Bronson (11) leaps to take a shot against the Spartans. The Nixyaawii Golden Eagles defeated the Pine Eagle Spartans 82-37 at Nixyaawii Community School on Thursday night.

LET'S TALK SPORTS

Wealth cannot be measured in wins and losses

The Hermiston boys basketball team has one game left — Walla Walla is at the Dawg House on Friday night.

While some may breathe a sigh of relief that the season is finally over, I think people are overlooking what has made this season successful outside the win column.

Hermiston brought in Drew Preuninger to coach the team. He knew the cupboard was bare, but he was excited to take the reins.

A self-proclaimed gym rat, Preuninger held an open gym in the summer to get to know his players and gauge their talent.

The former Concordia University sharpshooter took the job knowing he would have just one returning player from last season.

He took the job knowing the Mid-Columbia Conference is one of the toughest in the state.

He took the job knowing he would have not one player on his roster that could hang inside with Kamiakin's 6-foot-9 Kyson Rose, or Southridge's 6-6 Tristan Smith.

He took the job knowing it takes a special talent to shoot the ball like Walla Walla's Michael Cornia and Kennewick's Ayono Benavidez, and this year he would not have a player of that caliber.

That one returning player? He walked off the team. Less than a month ago, the Dawgs lost their leading scorer. He too, walked off the team.

Granted, losing is not fun. Getting your shot swatted into the stands can be embarrassing. Walking out on your team speaks to your character.

Despite what he does not have, Preuninger is rich.

Senior Ivan Rangel is a class act. He shakes his coach's hand after games and thanks him. For what? That is between them, but he is there every day, giving what he can for his team.

Fellow senior AJ Ramos-Barron has stepped into a leadership role, and has spent time helping the younger players adjust to the varsity scene.

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SPORTS SHORTS

Bryant memorial set for Feb. 24 at Staples Center

By STEFANIE DAZIO
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A public memorial service for Kobe Bryant, his daughter and seven others killed in a helicopter crash is planned for Feb. 24 at Staples Center, a person with knowledge of the details told The Associated Press on Thursday.

The arena is where Bryant starred for the Los Angeles Lakers for two decades and the date 2/24 corresponds with the No. 24 jersey he wore

and the No. 2 worn by his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna.

No official announcement about the memorial has been made. The person who provided the information to the AP is knowledgeable about the planning and spoke only on condition of anonymity. *The Los Angeles Times* was first to report the event, citing two anonymous sources with knowledge of the planning.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has said a memorial would be held but his office had no immediate com-

ment, nor did the Lakers or Staples Center.

Staples has played host to other memorials, including for Michael Jackson and, last year, for rapper Nipsey Hussle.

Bryant was killed Jan. 26 when the helicopter carrying him, his daughter and the others crashed into a mountainside while flying to a girls basketball tournament at his Mamba Academy outside Los Angeles. Gianna's team was coached by Bryant and was playing in the tournament.



AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

Fans gather at a memorial for the late Kobe Bryant in front of Staples Center in Los Angeles on Sunday.